



Genus of Sex, or The Sexing of Jins

Citation

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. Forthcoming. Genus of sex, or the sexing of jins. International Journal of Middle East Studies.

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:9637983>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Open Access Policy Articles, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#OAP>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Genus of Sex or The Sexing of Jins

Afsaneh Najmabadi

History and Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality

Harvard University

Boylston Hall G33

Harvard Yard

Cambridge, MA 02138

najmabad@fas.harvard.edu

accepted for publication in International Journal of Middle East Studies

Genus of Sex or The Sexing of jins¹

Over recent decades, Iran has witnessed radical transformations concerning the conceptualization of and procedural standards for changing sex. Concurrently, psychologists, medical and legal practitioners, law enforcement officials, and scholars of fiqh have debated the advisability (in debates among health and legal professionals) or the permissibility (among scholars of fiqh) of sex-change. In this article, I do not propose to review these debates.² Rather, I ask what historical transformations of the concept of jins/genus has informed these debates and enabled the contemporary dominant concepts and practices. Simply put: How has jins come to mean sex and how does this matter?

Today, there is a vast generative circulation of discourses in Iran about sex and sexuality that informs concepts and practices of marriage, mental health, social harmony, and individual happiness. The familiar psycho-biomedical discourse on gender-sex dimorphism has become interwoven into a religio-cultural cosmos.³ This discourse is pivoted on a notion of sex that needs a set of socio-cultural normative constraints to produce health and happiness. Its naturalness (through affiliation with the hormonal and chromosomal make-up of each person) also provides for possibilities of developmental failure. A host of sex-gender non-conformities are rendered diseased abnormalities caused by such failure.

The dominance of this discourse is very recent in Iran. Indeed, the word most commonly used today in Persian to mean sex, namely, jins, acquired this meaning in the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. In nineteenth-century and earlier writings, jins would be used as a general term for categorization. The nineteenth-century Steingass Persian-English dictionary, for instance, defines: “**jins**, A jins, Genus, kind,

stock, sort, mode; gender; goods, movables, articles, things; grain, corn; crop, products;”⁴ Its infrequent usage in a sex/gender context -- for instance, in certain sections of jurisprudential literature (fiqh) -- was “subject-dependent,” which meant such categorization under one specific subject (such as inheritance) would not generalize into a universal norm.⁵

Nor was the nineteenth-century medical discourse on matters that would now be named sexual focused on naming desire as sexual, or categorizing related practices as natural or unnatural. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the medieval Perso-Islamic⁶ philosophical-medical discourse on desires, practices, diseases, and the body was selectively and partially replaced by adaptations of European modern medical treatises.⁷ In this process, important shifts in gender and sexual notions emerged in the course of “achieving modernity.” First, a disavowal of homoerotic desire set in motion seemingly contradictory, yet in fact enabling, dynamics. It marked homosociality as empty of homoeroticism and same-sex practices, and by insisting on that exclusion, it provided homoeroticism and same-sex practices a homosocially-masqueraded home. Second, this masquerading move could not but affect homoeroticism itself. The amrad (young male adolescent object of desire for adult men), for instance, had been a distinct figure, both as an object of desire and as a figure for identification. By the end of the nineteenth century, both positions of desire became feminized. To desire to be desired by a man, or to desire a man, both became positions occupy-able only by woman.⁸ Finally, this gender-dimorphic dynamic emerged in tandem with marking same-sex desire as unnatural.

Yet even as these cultural transformations re-coded same-sex desire as unnatural, in Iranian modernist discourse, this unnatural desire was seen to be an unfortunate effect of a social institution; namely, gender segregation. It was argued that as men socialized only with other men, their natural desire for women became, of necessity, redirected toward beardless male adolescents who, through an error of nature, looked like women. In other words, everyone was presumed to be naturally heterosexual.⁹ Distinct from what Foucault had suggested for nineteenth-century European transformations¹⁰, this recoding of desire in Iranian modernist discourse was not driven by the logic and bio-politics of production of “governmentable citizens.”¹¹ While not linked to a state transformative project, the modernist re-thinking of male-male sexual desire and practices was embedded within the larger notions of modern nation-hood: such desires and practices became a sign of Iran’s backwardness and a source of national shame which necessitated a re-configuration of male-female relations. Modernists argued that if women were allowed to socialize with men, if they were educated and would begin to unveil, this unnatural vice would disappear.

Significantly, an ethico-medical discourse on male same-sex desire as illness -- through the figure of ma’bun (an adult male who desires to be penetrated), and in particular in Ibn Sina (980-1037)’s discourse on ’ubna as illness of will -- was available from classical ethico-medical texts.¹² The modernist projection of same-sex desire as a derivative abnormality, a deviation¹³ forced upon the natural as a consequence of the unfortunate social arrangement of sex-gender segregation, could have produced a tendency to “type” men (and women) who “still” engaged in same-sex practices as stricken with some sort of “illness.” Yet modernists were optimists; they imagined that

sex-gender hetero-socialization, in particular unveiling of women, would re-direct men's sexual desires away from young males onto females, and that women, once satisfied by the hetero-sexualized men had no reason to turn to other women. This optimism initially worked against mapping of same-sex desire and practices onto minoritization of marked human bodies.¹⁴ However, the “failure” to produce homogeneously heterosexual modern men and women -- despite decades of sex-gender heterosocialization, propagation of the notion of companionate romantic marriage, and of complementarity of the two now-transcribed as “opposite sexes”-- provided the socio-cultural space for reconfigurations of desire.

A Trafficking Sign¹⁵

To map out the historical genealogy of these reconfigurations, I begin with spelling out the different domains that are traversed by sex/jins in contemporary Persian (in Iran) discourse.¹⁶ I will then move onto how they are different from their nineteenth-century precedents.

1. Sex/jins is used to differentiate and categorize male and female bodies into opposing body types. This usage keeps jins connected with its classical meaning of genus of body, but with an important difference: in that register, the different bodies were not defined as opposite types. Today, across a variety of discourses -- marital advice literature, behavioral psychology, as well as theological texts -- men and women are said to be opposite (if at times complementary) types, jins-i mukhalif.
2. In categorizing men and women as opposite sexes, the typology is focused anatomically on genital differentiation (sexual organs, alat-i jinsi); in medical

texts, hormonal (often referred to as sexual hormones, haurmun-ha-yi jinsi) and chromosomal differences form additional grounds for the distinction. In behavioral psychology texts, jins is used for differentiating gender behavior (raftar-i jinsi) naturally (jinsiyat-i tabi'i) appropriate for girls and boys and later for men and women.

3. Sex/jins is used in a cluster of concepts focused on issues of sexuality: in discussion of desire (mayl-i jinsi), attraction (jazzabiyat-i jinsi), relations and acts (ravabit-i jinsi, a'mal-i jinsi). In this context, since the mid-1960s, same-sex desire has been named hamjinsgara'i (being inclined to someone of one's own sex/genus) -- distinct from hamjinsbazi, playing with someone of one's own sex, a word that is considered to be more pejorative, as it links with the earlier sexual practices marked by various hierarchies of age (amradbazi, bachchah'bazi), social status (ghulam'bazi), and ethno-religious differences (mugh'bachchah'bazi, tarsabachchah'bazi).¹⁷
4. It is used in medical discourse such as in reference to sexually-transmitted diseases, diseases of sexual organs.
5. It is used in criminal discourse, as in sexual crimes (jarayim va jinayat-i jinsi).
6. More recently a category of sexual harassment and violence has emerged in the feminist press, azar va khushunat-i jinsi.

I would like to note two things here. First, jins rarely appears as such in any of these registers. We find jins either in its adjectival form (jinsi, sexual); it modifies something (such as organs, hormones, bodies) that through that modification becomes linked to a differentiation between male and female.¹⁸ Alternatively, in a meaning that comes closer

to English gender, it modifies behavior, crimes, violence along a masculine-feminine axis; or it occurs as modifier of desire, attraction, acts, relations – that is in what comes close to English sexuality (at times jinsiyat is used in this context, although in feminist literature jinsiyat is also used for gender – sometimes modified as social gender, jinsiyat-i ijtimai'i)—and as in the previous two usages, it links these categories to a binary differentiation.

Jins also appears as modified: with other nouns and adjectives, such as in jins-i muzakkar/mu'annas (male/female sex) and jins-i mukhalif (the opposite sex); with a prefix (hamjins, same-sex), sometimes combined with suffixes, such as hamjinsgara (homosexual) and hamjinsbaz (same-sex player). To use jins as sex without any modifier or modifying work tends to pull it back to its meaning of genus. For instance, if one were to ask in Persian about someone's preference in sex and used jins in that context, it is more likely that the sentence would be understood as asking whether one prefers a male or female partner (for sex). In fact in the context of “doing sex”, the word sex, pronounced siks, is used in Persian. For instance, a book on sexual pleasure is sub-titled siks zindagi ast (Sex is life itself.)¹⁹

The second point to note is that jins as meaning “Genus, kind, stock, sort, mode; ... goods, movables, articles, things; grain, corn; crop, products” continues to be in full usage in contemporary Persian. A popular saying, kabutar ba kabutar, baz ba baz/kunad hamjins ba hamjins parvaz (dove with dove, falcon with falcon/those of the same jins fly together) circulates the older meaning of jins as genus even as its affiliation with the prefix ham- (same) now echoes same-sex. Similarly, jins's prevalent usage as “goods” in commercial discourse (and in nationalist slogans such as “Irani: jins-i Irani bikhar”

(Iranian: buy Iranian products) or as “kind”, as in payment in-kind in contrast to monetary payment, at times has enabled a pun: Paying someone “in kind” can now double up as paying in sex.²⁰ In other words, the non-confinement of jins to sex and its continued circulation in many registers, with their own genealogical affiliations of meaning, affect meaning of jins-as-sex and vice versa. The circulation of hamjins as of-the-same-genus informs the meaning of hamjinsgara as homosexual. Jinsi as in-kind contributes to the meaning of jinsi as sexual. At the same time, there are some impassable lines of meaning. For instance, one cannot say in Persian, “I had jins-i khub,” meaning one has had good sex. Jins-i khub continues to mean “of good quality” and its register is in commerce, most commonly textiles. Conversely “badjins” (distinct from jins-i bad meaning of terrible quality) is used as an adjective for people and means naughty or of ill character. In short, an important effect of the diffusion of meaning among these many registers is that jins is never just sex. Nor can genus be innocent of sex.²¹

A Forest of Genealogies

What were some of the nineteenth- and pre-nineteenth-century concepts that could be considered disparate precedents to this cluster around sex/jins? Given the work of jins between registers of genus and sex, how does one de-familiarize one’s reading eyes that have been trained to see “sex” (jins) as a “universal signifier” in several distinct and at times disaffiliated registers – that is, how does one not to read back “sex” into jins even as one is looking for emergence of jins as sex?²²

Moreover, as late as the late-nineteenth century, the historian of “something called sexuality” has to turn to a diverse body of texts: medical, theological, philosophical, literary, erotological, among others. But already as I separate these texts into named

genres, I immediately have to indicate that the separation of texts into medical, theological, erotological, etc. is not only anachronistic but also self-defeating. A continuum of scholars, sometimes the same individuals, produced many of the texts in these presumably different genres. As Dallal has discussed at length, Islamic medical literature, for instance, covered so broadly and thoroughly “such subjects as sexual pleasure, foreplay, and the positions of intercourse” that they “in effect incorporated into their discussions the erotic art of love and its techniques.”²³ Indeed, one of the institutional and conceptual challenges that has in part impeded studies of the deployment of sex and sexuality in modern Middle East historiography has been that within modern academic disciplinary divisions, one has to become at once a historian of science, a student of Islamic philosophy and ethics, a legal/theological studies scholar, an expert in literary studies of erotic literature, etc. in order to figure out genealogically how and whence the contemporary discourses of sexuality have emerged and what socio-cultural labor they perform.

Correspondingly, a central task of such historiography becomes bringing out the “border-making/trafficking” work of the emerging category of “jins-as-sex.” As these various texts became distinct genres, something named “sex” began to travel among them and connect them. How did jins-as-sex contribute to producing this “genre effect” while itself emerged as a trafficking sign, delineating these overlapping discourses into distinct genres through traversing across them? In other words, in what ways were distillation of qarabadin (the *pharmakon*) into pharmaceuticals and quvvah-i bah (ability for coitus) becoming sexual prowess effects of related processes? How did bio-medicalization of tibb, jurisprudentialization of fiqh, ethics-ization of akhlaq, and pornographication of

“texts of pleasure” (among other makings of genres) depend on the “deployment of sexuality”? How did jins, which may have done very different work in fiqh, tibb, qarabadin, and akhlaq, emerge as a universal category signifying male and female sexes, as distinct bodies, with distinct sexual organs, possessing different sexual desires and prowess, and different socio-cultural rights and obligations that became grounded in “sex”?²⁴

With these challenges in mind, I now turn to four registers -- desire, practices, regeneration, and naming of body parts – that provide us with relevant precedent concepts for today’s usages of jins.

- a. Discussion of desire (shahvat, lust)²⁵ in pre-nineteenth-century texts takes place in several types of literature, including ethics, jurisprudence, medicine, the qarabadin (pharmaceutical) -- namely, texts on remedial herbs, spices, minerals and other healing combinatories --, and texts focused on techniques; whether penned by the same thinker or not. Lust is often defined in distinction from anger – the two considered the most primary human sentiments. Lust is a generic term for desire; indeed what we would now name sexual desire (in the earlier texts: shahvat-i farj, lust for orifices) is seen to be homologous with lust for food, for speech, but also for eyeing/seeing (and through eyeing, it becomes connected with desire for beauty, engendered by the object being seen). Most commonly, three primal desires are seen to be lust for food (desire arising from stomach, shahvat-i shikam) – viewed as an originary lust, as it caused Adam to initiate a chain of acts that led to revealing of genitals and desire for intercourse. Its remedy: fasting, practicing hunger. Second comes the lust for orifices (shahvat-i farj, sometimes

translated as the lust for vagina, but farj is a general term for orifice) as the most domineering lust, the most difficult to control; its remedy is again practicing hunger and prayers. Finally, the lust to speak (shahvat-i kalam) has as its remedy keeping silent.²⁶ It is lust for orifices that becomes transformed into sexual desire; in this process it becomes disconnected from its affiliation with desire for food, for speech, and for eyeing. Through its naming as sexual (jinsi) and its articulation through psycho-biomedical and criminological discourses, sexual desire becomes affiliated with (and thought as caused by) sexual hormones and chromosomes, and focused on sexual organs. It also becomes causative of practices, and at times of violence and crimes.

- b. Practices. Discussion of what we now term sexual practices in pre-nineteenth-century texts covers more conventional topics, such as intercourse (jama‘, mujami‘at, muqaribat, musahibat, later substituted by their Persian equivalents amizish, nazdiki), as well as the more contentious topics, such as anal penetration (liwat), female same-sex practices (most commonly referred to as musahiqah and tabaq-zani, literally meaning rubbing and tribadism).²⁷ These variously named practices will emerge under a generalized category: sexual acts and relations (a‘mal-i va ravabit-i jinsi). In this process, what constituted a literature of techniques (funun), usually instructing a man how to facilitate orgasm in a woman (thought as necessary for conception), becomes marginal to modernist discourse. Lack of sexual satisfaction (‘adam-i irza’-i jinsi) becomes a hormonal and psychological problem to be diagnosed and treated by appropriate experts.

- c. Regeneration (tanasul). Again, a topic discussed in a variety of texts, but also in texts focused solely on this topic. This literature includes discussion of desire and practice, but also such other topics as infertility, pre-determination of sex/genus of the fetus, pregnancy, and sometimes post-natal issues, including breast-feeding and child-care more generally.
- d. Last, there is naming of body organs: a topic that I trace through all the above registers and texts.

How did nineteenth-century texts begin to differ in these registers from the more classical Perso-Islamic literature and what did this re-shaping of knowledge have to do with something named jins?²⁸

Classical Islamic thinking on the body is deeply influenced by Greek thought.²⁹ The body is often imagined as a kingdom; different body parts connected through a series of causal effects that produce harmonies and disharmonies; seasons, foods, moods, and daily practices are all inter-connected to minimize disharmony and produce harmony. As Dallal summarizes, “A human body in a state of wellness indicated that the humors were in equilibrium. ... Thus humors and the forces inherent in them are transmitted to the sexual organs.”³⁰

Medical texts were structured (and structured medical knowledge) around categorization of remedies. A sub-variant genre was organized around categorization of remedies according to diseases they cured; these were structured along hierarchy of body parts, starting from diseases of the head, eyes, ears, nose, face, lips, mouth, teeth, throat, chest and lungs, heart, breast, stomach, liver, pancreas, intestines, rectum, bladder and bowels (with a sub-section on diseases specific to women), back, bottom, hands and

legs.³¹ Last, there were texts focused solely on one topic, such as treatises on procreation.³²

In the second group, there is no clustering of several organs under one title, even if several organs are discussed in one sub-section. For instance, there is no concept of “regenerative organs” (*alat-i tansuli*, *jahaz-i tanasul*), a very common concept by the end of the nineteenth century. Organs are named individually, penis (*qazib*), vagina (*mahbil*), etc. This type of text in part provided the tradition that starting in mid-nineteenth century, with some modification, became the new anatomical texts (books of *tashrih*). The latter initially retained the organization of medical knowledge according to hierarchy of body parts. For instance, diseases that later become clustered as “regenerative diseases” -- venereal diseases -- appear in different places: gonorrhea, impotence, involuntary ejaculation, and *'ubna* each appear under the section that discusses different organs they reference. Yet a clustering of body organs began to emerge: an internal re-positioning of the anatomical body parts, based on the presumed function of organs for the body and human life – such as hearing organs, vision organs, feeding organs -- in place of individual organs discussed from head to toe. One such clustering emerged around the notion of regeneration and regenerative organs, *alat-i tanasuli*. Penis and vagina were no longer discussed under the section to do with bladder and urinary organs; they were now clustered under a specific adjacent section named regenerative organs. Mapping the emergence of this clustering (through a refocus of body organs according to their alleged functions) is critically important for understanding the naming of regenerative organs that later morphed into sexual organs. One place where these two different kinds of

categorization and naming most diverged was the shifting of breast from the section on chest and lung to regenerative organs.

Concurrently, an important shift in the conceptualization and organization of medical knowledge was consolidated: from an organization based on remedies to one according to symptoms of diseases. Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Tafrishi's 1883 Medical Pathology (Patuluzhi-i tibbi: Matla' al-tibb-i Nasiri) provides a good example of this shift. He explicitly states in his introduction that "these days (dar in ayyam) categorizing diseases has been freed from following the order of organs" (p. 5); chapters follow on fevers, cholera-type diseases, swellings, hemorrhage, diseased discharges (in which section there is a discussion of involuntary seminal discharges), hydropsy, and diseases of the nerves -- in which there is a sub-section on nervous disorders in regenerative acts (ikhtilal-i 'asabani-i a'mal-i tanasul), including frequent and involuntary erection (firismus), excessive lust in women (nanfuman [nymphomania]), impotence, and suffocation of the womb (ikhtinaq-i rahim, a favorite topic, taking up fully over 8 pages in this section and then another three pages under madness, junun-i ikhtinaq-i rahim), etc.

As important as entry of bio-medical knowledge, training, and practices are to these transformations, there is another significant site of translational transplantations that was critical to the emergence and cultural labor of jins-as-sex – namely, texts centered on marriage.

Health of Marriage: Found in Translation

Modernist texts about health of marriage were distinct from the classical Perso-Islamic genre of books on nikah. An early example of this genre is Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi's Maturing of Joy in the Health of Marriage (Bulugh al-ibtiḥaj fi siḥḥat al-izdivaj).

Published in Istanbul, most likely some time in the 1890s, the book's introduction indicates that it was based on a French book on "health of marriage." The original French, said to have been reprinted 175 times within a short time (p. 3), sold thousands of copies in Istanbul.³³ The book is driven by a concern that was becoming pronounced among Iran's modernist intellectuals: that the nation's health was threatened by bad marriages, including marriages that facilitated the spread of diseases. The health of the nation became dependent on the healthy couple, for which reason marital health is said to be a state matter, not a private concern. (pp. 21-22) The book, advocating government intervention, begins with a general discussion of marriage and its benefits, and proceeds with chapters on the timing of marriage, followed by a description of what is referred to as regenerative organs (a'za-yi tanasul, first of men's, then of women's), chapters on the breast and breast milk, and increases and decreases in regenerative power (quva-yi tanasuli) according to age. Subsequent chapters discuss intercourse, conception, sex pre-determination in conception, preserving health in general and regenerative health in particular, advice for couples, infertility, impotence, things that strengthen desire (bah va shahvat), pregnancy, child-birth, and menopause. It ends with some remedies and a number of illustrations. Like classical texts, Health of Marriage uses the words jins (and jinsiyat) in the context of distinguishing male from female (p. 5, and extensively when discussing how a fetus becomes male or female, pp. 101-122), but when referring to body parts, it either uses such expressions as regenerative organs (a'za-yi tanasul), or specifically names the parts, such as penis (qazib), vagina (farj), etc. It thus saddles the transition between inherited concepts and the more recent emergent clustering of organs in medical literature.³⁴

This genre of literature, driven by the modernist concern with national health as mediated through familial health, and in particular the health of marriage, found a wider audience from the late 1920s when the newly founded state (under Riza Shah Pahlavi, r. 1926-1941) became increasingly invested in the production of healthy nationals and servants of the state.³⁵ An early translated text in this genre was Rahnuma-yi shawhar-i javan dar marhalah-i izdivaj (Guidance for young husbands for the stage of marriage) -- a translation of Sylvanus Stall's What a young husband ought to know (Philadelphia: Vir, 1897, in Sex and Self series). The book was translated in 1929 into Persian by Hidayatallah Khan Suhrab, a Major in the Shiraz brigade.³⁶

After an initial discussion of the physiognomy and psychology of men and women, the book turns to advising how young husbands should take care of their wives, to be sociable, loving, caring husbands. Among other things, this book marks one of the early moments of the entry of jins as sex (beyond differentiating male from female) into Persian. Suhrab translates "Sex and Self", the series title, as "jinsiyat va dasturat-i shakhsi," literally, sex and personal directives.³⁷ While he continues to use such late-nineteenth-century categorization and naming as regenerative body, organs, and acts (hay'at-i tanasuli, alat-i tanasuli, a'mal-i tanasuli) -- at times stretching regenerative to include desire and feeling (shahvat-i tanasuli, mayl-i tanasuli, hiss-i tanasuli) -- he also uses jins in its present sense of sex, in its adjectival form jinsi, in such contexts as sexual affection (muhibbat-i jinsi), sexual desire (shahvat-i jinsi), sexual attractions (injazabat-i jinsi), moderation in sexual relations (i'tidal-i munasibat-i jinsi). Note that, as discussed earlier, when sex is standing alone, as in the series title, Sex and Self, it is not jins that stands for sex but a related noun jinsiyat, which in more recent texts has come to stand

for sexuality or for gender. The usage of “regenerative” (tanāsuli) as an alternate for jinsi (as in shahvat-i tanāsuli and shahvat-i jinsi) may indeed point to the difficult “birth” of jins-as-sex, precisely because jins was already embedded in a very wide and dense network of other-than-sex meanings. Translation of Sex and Self into Jins and ... would have indeed been a very confusing series title to its Persian reader, who would have most likely assumed jins meant goods and commodities. At least in this earlier moment, and given the link between sex and regeneration, the latter (tanāsul) carried the burden of translational transplantation of jins into sex.

At the same time, the use of jins in reference to desire establishes two conceptual bridges in this text. By its use in sexual desire (shahvat-i jinsi), simultaneous with regenerative desire (shahvat-i tanāsuli), it establishes a bridge between sex and regeneration. It also makes a connection between sex and gender, so-to-speak; it conceives desire, even if not regenerative, within the context of a marital relation between a man and a woman, connecting it to that concept which had been used for distinguishing male from female. It thus ties desire with a heterosexual distinction.

It is important to point out, however, that the re-articulation of earlier concepts is already a grafting of new ones: while Suhraḥ uses jins (in its adjectival form) for differentiating man from woman (tamayuz-i jinsi, ikhtilāf-i jinsi), the distinction is framed within a notion of complementarity of these two distinct jinses, rather than the earlier notions of woman as a deficient incomplete man. This distinct/complementary status of woman provided a transitional step to man/woman defined as opposite, though still at times complementary, sexes.

The medical establishment, in the same period, was absorbed differently in a public health panic: it was focused on venereal diseases in general and syphilis in particular. There, the vocabulary and concepts evidence continuity with the late-19th-century discourse that had emerged out of Dar al-Funun medical training and European physicians who trained the new medical corp.³⁸ Muhammad Ali Tutia's many books on sexual hygiene are good examples. Tutia was a doctor who had practiced for many years in Istanbul and had published a number of books on these topics in Turkish. He established a private clinic in Tehran in the early 1930s, focused on combating venereal diseases, and began to re-write and publish his books in Persian.³⁹ While Tutia uses jins in his writings in the sense of distinguishing male from female, he continues the earlier language when it comes to "regenerative organs" (a'za-yi tanasuli), intercourse (muqaribat, mujami'at), regenerative diseases (amraz-i tanasuli). At times, like Suhrab, Tutia stretches the linguistic capacity of regeneration, as in such combinations as: regenerative deviation (zilalat-i tanasuli), regenerative passion (shahvat-i tanasuli), corrupt regenerative morality (fisad-i akhlaq-i tanasuli), regenerative fatigue (ta'ab-i tanasuli), and "unnatural regenerative relations" (ravabit-i ghayr-i tabi'i-i tanasuli). Such formulation as "regenerative relations among the two sexes" (Malish va tamas, p. 82, munasibat-i tanasuli dar mian-i dau jins) provides us with an example in which, while jins is used for a categorizing distinction between male and female, what in Suhrab's translation had been (and later more generally will become) sexual relations continues to be thought and named in terms of regeneration. Similarly in "natural regenerative relations" (ravabit-i tabi'i-i tanasuli, p. 83) regeneration is used for what would have earlier been named as intercourse (muqaribat), to be soon replaced by sexual, jinsi. In the

texts of this transitional period (late 1920s through 1940s), tanasuli continued to carry the burden of sexual, as if a shy euphemism.

Psyche of Sex

While the twentieth-century medical texts, until the 1950s and '60s, continued the usage of the late-19th-century language, with tanasuli acting as a clustering word that brought together previously distinct concepts (such as organs, practices, desires) into a single group, as we saw, in the early decades of the twentieth century, the usage of jins-as-sex (as in jinsi and jinsiyat in Suhrab's text) literally popped up in a different domain, that of marital manners and know-how. This could have been an "accident" of translation, by which I mean the persons who became interested in "sex-and-self" type of literature were not initially from the medically trained emerging doctors' corps; they had come across the popular "how to" sex education marital advice literature from a different direction. For example, unfamiliarity with (or willed ignorance of) the translator of What a young husband ought to know with existing Persian texts, in particular medical texts, is clear from his leaving the names of bodily parts in English with no Persian equivalent next to it; examples include clitoris, nymphae, scrotum (all on p. 159), ovaries (p. 160), vagina (p. 162), which is also translated as "woman's regenerative organ" (alat-i tanasuli-i zan), rather than using the commonly used word mahbil. Though contingent, the translation issue is not a meaningless accident; it points to the re-shaping of domains of knowledge production and dissemination, a parting of ways of domains of modern science and popular urban cultural concerns from domains of traditional medicine and daily practices previously codified through what we now call religion.⁴⁰

Central to the increasing production and circulation of marital advice books was the notion that troubles in modern marriages were caused by sexual ignorance. Husbands were believed not to know how to keep their wives happy, leading to increasing frigidity among women (an inversion of the old anxiety over women's nine parts of desire) and an alarming rise in divorce rates among the growing urban middle classes. Ignorant parents were said to be producing confused adolescents who turned into failed, abnormal, adults, with much ink spilled over men's impotence, masturbation, same-sex and other "deviancies." I imagine that the "flare-up" of a new kind of sexual education manual may indicate some recognition of the "failure" of modernist optimism on naturalized heterosexuality. Modern men and women did not seem to know how to keep each other happy, sexually speaking. While classical Perso-Islamic texts did not presume natural heterosexuality and had extensive advice literature for husbands on how to satisfy their wives and in particular how to ensure female orgasm (thought to be critical to conception), the modernist presumption of natural heterosexuality had largely cut itself off from this earlier literature and left modern men and women to practice sex "naturally." The translation of marital advice from Anglo-American sources into Persian, from the late 1920s to the present day, is a response to this failure of nature.⁴¹ These translated texts did not simply appear as cheap books. Most importantly, many of them were first serialized in popular magazines, such as Khvandaniha, before appearing as books. The success of the early translations, such as the Sex and Self series, drew attention of others to this genre. For the modernizing urban middle class, translated texts carried the additional authority of Euro-American science. Particularly successful among such translations has been A Marriage Manual, by Hannah and Abraham Stone. First

translated by Rahim Muttaqi Irvani and published in 1948, it has gone through numerous re-translations and reprints to the present.⁴² This body of advice texts proved to be critical to the consolidation of jins-as-sex, a development concurrent with the topically related entry of psychology, in particular vernacular psychology, into Persian, from the early 1930s.⁴³ Freud's initial entrance into Persian was as a theoretician of "lust."

In 1933, Ibrahim Khvajah'nuri, a columnist (and later a practicing psychoanalytically-oriented psychologist), wrote a newspaper article under the title "Psychoanalysis," (the word transliterated into Persian). There he first related an anecdote from a gathering, in which he had to evade the question that a European had asked him about the impact of Freudism on literature in Iran -- he was too embarrassed to explain that Freud was unknown in his country.⁴⁴ He was now happy to report that he had recently met a doctor who had returned from his European education with this specialty and was indeed busy writing a scientific book on this topic. Khvajah'nuri was now reporting the gist of his conversation with this doctor. He warns that this discussion is not without its dangers, since the axis of this theory is lust (shahvat). What follows is a brief introduction to talk therapy and psychoanalysis, a method of cure without medicine that takes a long time, thus it is expensive, and most people neither trust nor can afford it. This article is possibly the first introduction of Freud in a major newspaper in Iran. After an initial note on the history of psychoanalysis, Khvajah'nuri focuses largely on explaining to the reader that in this theory the concept of lust, later in the article specifically marked as sexual lust (shahvat-i jinsi), is not "exclusively linked with regenerative (tanasuli) acts, but thousands of things we do daily are all done under the logic/force (beh hukm-i) of sexual lust even though they have no connection whatsoever with regeneration." The article

introduces the concept of the unconscious and of the psyche (“as opposite of the corporeal (jismani),” possibly so explicated in order to mark it away from soul and spirit). After a discussion of infantile, childhood, and adolescent sexual lust, Khvajeh’nuri suggests that shahvat is the Persian translation of libido (which appears in Latin characters in text), and concludes by discussing various “psycho-neuroses” (the word transliterated into Persian) that have psychological roots and “at times cause deviation from natural satisfaction of needs and produce unnatural and strange habits (‘adat-i ghayr-i tabi’i va ‘ajib va gharib).”

The traffic between regeneration and sex (tanasil and jins) continued to inform discussion of “libido” in the 1930s. An article on hysteria, for instance, in *Ittila‘at* (7 August 1934, p. 2, no author), reported on its psychoanalytical treatment in Europe and invoked the name of the “Austrian scholar (‘allameh) Freud.” It argued that the new science explained this disease as caused by “desires related to regenerative pleasures, especially from one’s childhood.” At the same time, a growing discussion of the social positions of men and women, in the context of state-building initiatives of the 1920s and ‘30s, continued to use jins in its meaning of differentiation between male and female now overlaid with connotation of gender-sexual difference.⁴⁵ For example, an article, “Differences between woman and man,” argued that sexual and bodily differences between men and women constituted the ground for differences in mental capacities and division of tasks and specialization between the two sexes, and argued that “Equality of men and women in tasks and duties, history has amply proved, would lead to social revolution (against social laws and regime) and violent chaos with unknown consequences.”⁴⁶

While such statements may read as banal old-fashioned misogyny, the causal movement of jins between the register of marking bodily differences and the socio-cultural register of inequality between men and women is indeed very novel and indicative of vast discursive changes that I have suggested.⁴⁷ While classical Perso-Islamic thought differentiated between male and female bodies and jurisprudence allocated differential rights and obligations (for instance, inheritance of a son twice that of a daughter) one cannot find any connection between the first distinction and the second.⁴⁸ In other words, to take one example, in jurisprudential discourse (fiqh) the lesser share of a daughter's share of inheritance (half that of a son) was not articulated as derivative from some deficiency of the female compared to the male, whether in body, intellect, or otherwise. Such differences were God-created "facts of social life," encoded into the Qur'an and the body of what has become foundational to Islamic jurisprudence, namely the hadith (narratives attributed to the Prophet or one of his closest companions) and tafsir (interpretations of the Qur'an). Indeed, when in later literature a logical connection was argued between the two, the line of rationalization ran in the opposite direction: Women were said to be inferior to men on account of the allocation of a lesser share of inheritance. By the 1930s we already witness the movement of jins between these two registers, linking the two through a causal argument running from "the natural" to "the social."

As translations of books of psychology increased substantially from the mid-1940s, the circulation of jins for sex became consolidated in vernacular psychology. *Ittila'at* (27 May 1948, p. 2) carried an advertisement for a book, *Mayl-i jinsi dar zan va mard* (sexual desire in women and men), a selection of articles by "Freud, Andre Gide, Dr. Bezançon,

Prof. Andre (Alfred?) Binet, Dr. Hirschfeld, and others,” translated by ‘Abdullah Tavakkul.⁴⁹ Shortly after, a review of the book in the “Ittila‘at Library” column of the daily (9 June 1948, p. 6) noted that “Publishing books on sex (kitab-i jinsi, sexual books), which has become common (marsum shudeh) over the past year, is a very good development, so long as some promiscuous (havasbaz) youth do not abuse it. In our world in which the foundation of family has become very weak, ... moral corruption has increased, promiscuity and venereal diseases have become widespread, the only means to preserve the happiness of the young generation is to publish this genre of book so that perhaps some of the complicated problems of life are explicated.... Some of the topics that are covered in chapters of this book include: sexual desire, the strength and weakness of sexual desire, love, marriage, divorce, unfaithfulness, venereal diseases, ‘sexual deviance’ (‘ in original).”

The conceptual/linguistic challenges of this emerging field were explicitly recognized. “Ittila‘at Library” column (Ittila‘at, 23 September 1948, p. 7) reviewed the recently published translation of a book by Stefan Zweig titled Freud.⁵⁰ The review described the book as one that

analyzes the character and thinking of Freud, the healer of mental illness, and clarifies for the reader to some extent the principles of psychoanalysis. The significance of Freud’s teaching lies in his having based his work on the notion of sexual instinct, which up to that time in the world of science was imprisoned in a deadly silence. ... This scientist after fifty years of research demonstrated to the world that not satisfying the sexual instinct can affect the fate of mankind drastically and may upset the balance of a person’s daily life. Freud proved that

sexual instinct is one of the most important human instincts and throughout one's life. From birth to the last minutes of life, it rules over one's fate. In order to stay clear of destructive slips of this instinct and in order to be a virtuous person, one must carefully guide the development of one's sexual instinct so that one is not driven astray from its proper path.⁵¹

The congratulatory review continued in this vein and concluded by noting that this translation was a new venture, expressing hope that other knowledgeable people would further translate and disseminate Freud's thought. The emphasis on novelty of translation explained the poor quality of work by a well-known translator; the same book reviewer noted in the review of Dorian Gray's Picture (also published by Kanun-i Ma'rifat; review published in Ittila'at, 6 October 1948, p. 5) "the famous book by Oscar Wilde, one of the most important literary works from the West." After a brief discussion of Wilde's writings and the reaction of the conservative English society against him, his trial and imprisonment, the reviewer praised the Persian as "an elegant and smooth translation," and noted that this book had been translated by the same Farhad, the translator of Freud. Why was that translation not of the same high quality then? Persian language, the reviewer explained, had not matured yet as far as concepts pertaining to psychology and new Western scientific expressions were concerned and this posed grave problems for translators of technical and scientific books.

While in psychology, jins was appearing as sex, in a different genre -- advertisements concerning increasing sexual prowess (increase in one's quvveh-i bah, niru-yi shahvani) - - the older classical concepts of shahvat and bah (and more "modernly" quvveh-i tanasuli – regenerative prowess) continued to attract and inform readers' interest.⁵² Despite

increasing circulation, largely through vernacular psychology, even by the 1960s, jins-as-sex had not become universal, or solid; for sex, other words were used and jins informed alternative concepts. A 1968 textbook on “Sexology” could not take the meaning of sex for granted. Hasan Hasuri’s Raftar-i jinsi bar payeh-i siksaufiziulauzhi (Sexual behavior on the basis of sexo-physiology) -- specifically defined as a textbook “for medical students, physicians, and allied professions”⁵³ -- began by saying: “For the word Sex (typeset in English) we use as equivalent ‘jins’.” (p. 1) Importantly, jins in this textbook is defined not simply as the difference between male and female (“to distinguish male from female in different types of living beings,” p. 5), but as the basis for a whole host of other human characteristics: “Jins is a biological existence or quality on the basis of which sexual identity (hauviyat-i jinsi), that is, femaleness or maleness (narinigi ya madinigi), of a being is determined; and ordinarily each individual must be male or female.” (p. 5) Indeed, the project of the book in its entirety is to elaborate on the relationship between sexual behavior and a number of factors that go into the shaping of sex-gender identity, including “physical or bodily factors” (chromosomal sex, gonadal sex, hormonal sex, internal morphology, external morphology, and chromatinial sex are referenced in this section) and “psychological and social factors” (sex of rearing and assignment, gender role, and psychological sex-gender identity are referenced in this category). Having initially entered through translations of marital advice, by the late 1960s jins-as-sex had come “to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, ... sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and as a universal signified.”

Contemporary Configurations of Jins

I conclude this article with a brief consideration of how this specific genealogy of jins/sex/genus has enabled particular styles of living non-normative (ghayr-i muti‘arif) sex/gender lives in today’s Iran. How does, for instance, a trans-friendly fiqhi scholar such as Hujjat al-Islam Karimi’nia, conceptualize transsexuality and argue for its permissibility?

As I have already pointed out, the designation of male and female in classical fiqh is distinctly related to the observance of subject-dependent rules. These distinctions are not identical to and do not perform the same work as biological sex taxonomies. For instance, a person of ambiguous genitalia can become assigned a “ritual gender/sex” so that s/he would follow the rules of one gender/sex.⁵⁴ In contemporary discussions, the fiqhi notion of jins travels between two distinct registers: the classical Islamic meaning of jins as a taxonomical genus and the notion of sex in its modern sense. The transformation of socio-cultural notion of jins over the past century has brought into proximity the male/female distinction of fiqh with the biological sex taxonomies and social categories men and women. This proximity has enabled the convergence of some fiqhi thinking with the bio-medical and psycho-sexological discourse about transsexuality. A second and related translational transplantation, namely, the slippage between psyche and soul that has marked the entry of psychology into Persian-language Iranian discourse since the early decades of the twentieth century, has also been critical to this reconfiguration.⁵⁵ While philosophical and scientific debates about the relationship between soul and psyche continue to this day, the implicit certainty of some kind of relationship among nafs, ravan, and ruh enables the contemporary traffic between the new science of

psychology and the older sciences of religion (‘ulum al-din), and among healers of psyche and guardians of souls. Such murkiness allows medical professionals to present psycho-sexological concept of transsexuality as discordance between gender/sex of psyche and body in religiously familiar language of soul and body.⁵⁶ It also enables Karimi-nia to translate the psycho-sexological concept back into gender/sex discordance between soul and body, addressing transsexuality as a psychological condition in Islamic terms.

Shi‘i scholars such as Karimi-nia, however, are also trained to keep these categorical distinctions apart. Karimi-nia emphasizes this point in his book Taghyir-i jinsiyat: “Jins in its sense of ‘male and female’ is something that has emerged as a secondary meaning; the primary and principal meaning of jins is not ‘male and female.’”⁵⁷ The insistence on these definitional distinctions enables him to argue against those fiqhi scholars who oppose sex-change on the basis of opposition to changing God’s work of creation. He argues that the change of male to female and vice versa is not a change in genus of a created being; it is rather a change in his/her jinsi apparatus. (46) As importantly, fiqhi thought is not invested in etiology but instead works in a problem-solving mode.

Scientific problem solving has become closely connected with finding the causes of the problem; in fiqhi problem solving, the causes have no relevance. Fiqhi thought is invested in ensuring that all persons act in a manner that does not break the given rules, nor cross what it considers hudud-allah — the bounds set by allah for human behavior. Thus the shar‘i rules are subject-dependent; when the subject changes, the rule could be different. On certain issues, changing from the category male to female (or vice versa)

changes the subject and thus the rules. Indeed, that is how the gendered-ness of daily life becomes produced.

A difficult challenge, vis-à-vis “the subject of transsexuality,” arises when “the subject” is in transition. How does one deal with “the discordant subject,” with the “lack of correspondence between gender/sex of soul and body,” as Karimi’nia’s concept of transsexuality would have it? That is, what ritual gender/sex could be assigned to persons who are called (and often refer to themselves as) bilataklif [in a conundrum], or, as Karimi’nia refers to them, as those in barzakh [in purgatory]? Does one go by the gender/sex of the body or that of the soul? Here, trans persons insist on going by the soul. This is how many explain their daily living arrangements. It is also what enables their problematic, explicit, and often emphasized disaffiliation (we are not same-sex-players — ma hamjins-baz nistim) from people who engage in seemingly identical sex/gender practices, but who do not consider themselves transsexual. Karimi-nia, on the other hand, wary of the intrusion of same-sex-playing that haunts fiqhi thinking on this subject, leans toward going by the gender/sex of the body.

The specific genealogy of jins also informs other sex/gender identifications. As far as gay and lesbian identifications are concerned, for instance, the naming of these relationships as “same-sex” remains contested. In part, the ability of naming them with non-Persian words is a move that distinguishes them from the culturally abject category of same-sex-playing and its affiliated assignations, such as kuni and baruni. Moreover, the very distinct roles within these relationships bring any notion of same-ness between partners under pressure. As Johnson has observed in a different context, “... the very notion of ‘same-sex’ sexuality seems highly problematic in a situation where having the

same genitals apparently does not imply same sex or same gender, and where the genitals of the person one is having sex with are apparently much less important in defining gender, both theirs and one's own, than what those (same) genitals do.”⁵⁸ It is this same dynamic that works against the dominant use of generalized terms (such as homosexual) and a strong tendency to reach for its contingent locale and time.⁵⁹ In Iran, generalized terms have taken root in scientific taxonomies and religio-legal policy considerations, but not in anything close to their ubiquitous use in Euro-American identity politics. One does not just reach for a generalizable and generalized term everywhere and at all times as if it is a universal innate sign of humanity. Yet the reach of these general categories has clearly spread beyond their initial time and locale, but not evenly, nor imperially, as it is sometimes assumed. Some may appear in medical-psychology texts, others in the legal domain, and still others in journalism. Some may overlap. And non-normative persons may use them for particular ends in specific sites, to craft spaces of habitation. What one calls oneself generates possibilities for particular living arrangements. Sinnott, in the Thai context, has persuasively argued that becoming “a recognized social category — toms” rather than “females who are like men” — a process that she dates to the past twenty-five years — has made the formation of “communities and subcultures around them possible” (63). Becoming known as tarajinsiyati — the newest official neologism for transsexual — has become a similar organizing category for Iranian trans persons.

At issue is not to deny that the increasing self-referential circulation of terms such as gay, lesbian, and so on among Iranians today may indicate a different and emergent conceptual mapping of sexual practices and desires; what is problematical is the privileging of this emergent naming and configuring as intrinsically superior to other

modes of living non-heteronormative sex/gender lives. The current Internet gay discourse is saturated with such moralizing progressist narratives, defining its own homo-normalizing contours against the foil of these “past” and/or oppressive behaviors — in particular against same-sex-playing as frivolous and necessarily exploitative.⁶⁰

In this context, the shaping of an ambiguous nebula of overlapping and shifting assignations and (self-)cognitions — enabled by trans/same-sex/gender practices of everyday life and the legal legibility of trans as a state/religion/science-defined category — has had the paradoxical effect of re-inscribing the abjectness of the homosexual and at the same time providing a space of living a homosexual life within the legal shadow of transsexuality. This paradoxically productive and enabling double work does not have to acquire its resolution through disambiguation and pulling apart identity categories, separating and delineating trans from homo. While that is surely a possibility, other future configurations — in particular, living livable and loving lives within terms of ambiguity and contingent performances of selves-in-situational conduct — remains a powerfully attractive alternative.

¹ Earlier versions of this paper have been presented at the following occasions: Barnard College (2005), University of Connecticut (2007), University of Pittsburg (2007), AHA 2009 annual conference, University of Washington (2009), UCLA (2009), and University of Heidelberg (2009). I am thankful to organizers and participants for giving me the chance to present it and for their insightful feedback. My late friend, Natalie Kampen, pushed me persistently to transform it into an article. I dedicate it to her memory. I have also benefited enormously from critical commentary by Kathryn Babayan, Claudia Castañeda, Alireza Doostdar, Sara Omar, Arafat Razzaque, and Carole Vance. I am

grateful to all and to Elizabeth Angowski, Anoushe Modarresi, Reza Salami, Ali Akbar Vatanparast, and Kirsten Wesselhoeft for their invaluable research assistance. My gratitude to the four anonymous readers of International Journal of Middle East Studies, who also provided me with very helpful suggestions, and to Beth Baron and Sara Pursley for insistent encouragement.

² For these debates, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, Sex-in-Change: Configurations of Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Iran, Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming in 2013.

³ I use “sex-gender” as a hyphenated term in order to indicate its relative non-bifurcation into two categories in Iran, except in the domain of women’s rights activism and related feminist scholarship.

⁴ P. 0374. Accessed on-line, 02.09.06, <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/contextualize.pl?p.1.steingass.1861001>. Its usage in Arabic and Turkish seems to be of a similarly recent origin (correspondence with Dror Ze’evi, July 31, 2004). According to Sara Omar (correspondence, 12 January 2009), in Arabic, “one can date a quasi-attestation to ‘jins’ = ‘sex’ to as early as 1828-29! Ellious Bocthor's Dictionnaire français-arabe (revu et augmenté par Caussin de Perceval) (3rd ed. Paris 1864) lists the following: For ‘sexe’ he first gives the French definition ‘différence physique constitutive du mâle et de la femelle’ and then the Arabic ‘farj’. But under ‘sexuel’ (which he specifies as ‘qui tient au sexe, qui le caractérise’) his gloss is ‘jinsî’! ... (see page 320). Bocthor is known to have invented/coined a number of new words in Arabic. ... This maybe one of such words, coined by Bocthor.” Despite this lexical move in early 19th century, its widespread use in Arabic does not seem to have emerged till early decades of

the twentieth century. See Khaled El-Rouayheb, Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800 (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 158-161, and Joseph Massad, Desiring Arabs (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 32 note 106, and pp. 171-72.

⁵ In fact, one of jins's earliest modern re-configuration appears as close to our contemporary race/ethnicity, when Iranian modernists began to write about jins-i Irani. For a recent discussion of this issue, see Charles Kurzman, "Weaving Iran into the Tree of Nations," International Journal of Middle East Studies 37, 2 (May 2005): 137-166, p. 149. This is an issue that deserves more research, since in writings of many intellectuals of the nineteenth century, such as Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, issues of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality were critically interwoven with themes of backwardness and progress. The usage of jins as racialized ethnicity has been generally replaced by the later concept of nizhad, especially in the pan-Iranist currents of 20th-centural Iranian nationalism.

⁶ My focus in this research is on Persian sources. While I have checked some related Arabic sources and many of my arguments may be pertinent to the larger Islamic discourse, I generally do not assume so, except when depending on others' scholarship on this topic.

⁷ While European bio-medical sciences were embraced, as Cyrus Schayegh has persuasively argued, the embrace involved a national claiming: European scientific achievements were of ancient Irano-Islamic parentage. See Schayegh, Who is Knowledgeable is Strong: Science, Class, and the Formation of Modern Iranian Society, 1900-1950 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), Chapter 2. For the Ottoman Empire, Dror Ze'evi has persuasively argued that while the classical single-sex model of

human body -- with the woman as the imperfect version of man, and a single notion of desire that did not differentiate according to the sex-gender of the object of desire – was dropped in the nineteenth century, it was not replaced with one determinate model. Dror Ze'evi, Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East 1500-1900, University of California Press, 2006. This was also the case in Iran until recent decades.

⁸ For fuller discussion of this point, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁹ The use of nature and natural in this context calls for further historical work. The classical concept of fitra in this very same constitutive moment became tabi'a. Fitra connoted a person's "born with" characteristics; it was an all-inclusive category, not divided into physical and mental. Tabi'a came to mark what we now think of more physiological characteristics of a person. For example, in classical Islamic discourse, all persons were thought to be born with a Muslim fitra that would then be corrupted if brought up by non-Muslim parents. The later meaning of tabi'a came closer to nature as distinct from social and cultural.

¹⁰ See Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, tr. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

¹¹ The Tehran police (established in late 1878), for instance, was only marginally interested in "sex crimes." The police reports indicate a concern with theft, public drunkenness, and negligence of duty (on the part of members of the new police force itself!) more than any other offense. See Anisah Shayk Riza'i and Shahla Azari, editors,

Guzarish-ha-yi nazmiyah az mahallat-i Tihiran, two volumes (Tehran: Sazman-i asnad-i milli-i Iran, 1998). While in 1886 public coffeehouses were ordered closed “because of corrupt practices prevalent in these locations,” the dominant “corrupt practice” of interest to the police was female prostitution. (Shayk Riza‘i and Azari, Guzarish-ha, volume 1, p. 99.) Not until perhaps the late-1920s and ‘30s, do we have a government in Iran that would be intensely invested in regulating its subjects. See Cyrus Schayegh, Who is Knowledgeable is Strong. A category of crimes in national law specifically named sexual (jara’ m-i jinsi, as distinct from sinful acts punishable by religious sanctions – hudud and ta‘zir) was so named at a much later date.

¹² See Franz Rosenthal, “Ar-Razi on the Hidden Illness,” Bulletin of the History of Medicine 52 (1978): 45-60, which includes a section on Ibn Sina’s concept as well. For a summary, see p. 405 in Ahmad Dallal, “Pre-Modern Scientific Discourses on Female Sexuality” (which is more comprehensive than the title would suggest!), Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures, pp. 401-407, Volume III, Leiden: Brill, 2006.

¹³ I am using deviation for the Persian/Arabic word inhiraf. Conceptually, it is linked to the notion of the straight path (sirat-i mustaqim) that, if one followed, would take a person to the desired destination, whether moral or otherwise. It is this word (with its affiliated chains of meaning) that has now become the word for “sexual deviation” – inhiraf-i jinsi. Thus “sexual deviation” in the contemporary Iranian psycho-biomedical register continues its meaning of derailed desire, linked with presumption of natural heterosexuality of this earlier moment.

¹⁴ For discussion of minoritization of sexual types, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

¹⁵ A concept borrowed from Lisa Tickner, "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference." Genders, 3 (1988): 92-128.

¹⁶ The awkward phrase "Persian (in Iran)" signals the limitations of this research; it is focused on material written in Persian in Iran or about Iran. I have no knowledge of what is written in Persian in Afghanistan or Tajikistan; nor have I researched the subject in the many other languages of Iran (such as Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Baluchi, etc.)

¹⁷ There has been a lively debate in the Iranian diasporic gay press over this distinction. See for instance, Avaz, "Tafavut-i 'hamjins-gara' ba hamjins-baz va bachcheh-baz dar chist?" (What is the difference between 'the same-sex-inclined' with the same-sex-player and child-player"), in Homan, No. 9 (October-November 1994), pp. 27-33. Avaz seems unaware of emergence of the concept of hamjins-gara in the 1960s and '70s Iranian discourses of psychiatry and criminology, and suggests that hamjinsgara is a new expression of unknown origin in Persian. (pp. 29 and 32) Indeed, in the 1950s-70s, several other expressions were employed as well in sexological, marital advice, health, and popular general interest journals. These included: hamjins-khvahi (desiring same-sex), Khvandaniha June 28, 1958, p. 26 and July 22, 1967, pp. 41-43 (in the latter article, hamjis-dust, same-sex lover, is also used); hamjins-ju'i (seeking same-sex), Khvandaniha February 12, 1963, p. 40; hamjins-talab (desiring same-sex), Zan-i ruz March 1974, p. 102. My point is not to criticize the adoption (consciously or not) of the concept from this earlier discourse for one's own identification, but that the ahistorical consciousness may have contributed to the progressist invocation of hamjinsgara against hamjins-baz and bachcheh-baz. In Avaz's essay and in almost all subsequent writings on this topic, relations marked as hamjinsgara are attributed all desirable positive adjectives: they are

loving, egalitarian, and freely chosen; the others are exploitative and based on disparities of power and privilege. This critique was relentless in the pages of Homan and has continued to other gay publications that followed it. The move to make this differentiation, given the overwhelming hostile culture inside and outside Iran that these early gay activists faced, is totally understandable, but it did set from the start a tight normative frame for their anti-heternormative project. See Sima Shakhsari, “From Hamjensbaaz to Hamjensgaraa: Diasporic Queer Reterritorializations and Limits of Transgression.” Unpublished paper.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Claudia Castañeda for pointing me in this direction. For a similar move, but in a very different context, see Davidson’s discussion of the significance of “pervert” used as an adjective, rather than a noun. Arnold I Davidson, The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001, pp. 62-63.

¹⁹ Mahmud Iran’panah, ed., Majmu‘ah-i tan va ravan: siks zindagi ast: anchih kih lazimast az an bidanid (Body and Psyche Series: Sex is life itself: What you need to know about it). Publisher not given, 1999.

²⁰ When a sever earthquake hit the area around Qazvin in 1962, the popular storyteller Subhi Muhtadi, who was fund-raising in a gathering for the earthquake survivors and was refused by a “good-looking young man” (on the grounds that this was government’s responsibility), was said to have retorted by saying “This young man likes to aid his earthquake-survivor brothers in-kind (kumak-i jinsi).” Khvandaniha, June 15, 1974, p. 16. The column, working on Tehrani perceptions of Qazvinis as people who have a proclivity for male-male sex, was occasioned by reports of aid to African famine victims.

For a similar column, suggesting that some television personalities could aid the African victims “in-kind,” see Khvandaniha, June 29, 1974, p. 17.

²¹ For a full elaboration of a similar approach, see Davidson, The Emergence of Sexuality, chapter 5, “Styles of Reasoning: From the History of Art to the Epistemology of Science,” where he concludes, “We shall not understand the concept of perversion until we examine its rule-governed behavior with other concepts to see what kinds of statements can be made with it. Even the identical sentence need not constitute the same statement. A statement is defined by a ‘field of stabilization.’ ... This field of stabilization assures the possibility of the repeatability of statements, but also imposes particularly exacting restrictions on this repeatability.” (p. 140, emphasis in original) The continued belonging of jins to distinct registers works in part against stabilization.

²² I am taking the notion of sex as a universal/unique signified/signifier from Foucault, The History of Sexuality, where he argues that the emergence of “an analytics of sexuality” (148, emphasis in original) has made it possible “to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and as a universal signified.” (154)

²³ Dallal, “Pre-Modern Scientific Discourses,” 404.

²⁴ Over a century into these transformations, the work of sex has become so ubiquitous that it has now turned back onto classical texts themselves. In a recent translation of Ibn Sina’s Qanun into Persian, bah (coitus) has been translated into sexual instinct (gharizeh-i jinsi), shahwa (lust) into sexual desire (arizu-yi jinsi), ihtilam (becoming overpowered by

lust in sleep) into sexual dream (khvab-i jinsi), shahwa wa harakatuha (lust and its motions) into lustful desire and sexual motions (arizu-yi shahvani va harakat-i jinsi), "lil-dhakar wal-'untha" into "in the two sexes of male and female" (dar dau jins-i nar va maddeh). These examples have been selected from Qanun, tr. 'Abd al-Rahman Sharafkandi, Tehran: Surush, 2007, volume 5, pp. 217-225, and compared with respective passages in al-Qanun fi al-Tibb, Beirut: Nublis, 1999, volume 7.

²⁵ The dominant term classically is shahvat (lust); this term has been, in recent decades, taken over by mayl (inclination, desire) -- itself a significant shift in need of further historiographical research.

²⁶ The famous prophetic hadith, "gossip is a greater sin than fornication," makes sense as excesses of homologous passions -- satisfying passions in sinful ways being compared and ranked.

²⁷ In books of medicine, there is often a discussion of women who possess too long a clitoris, said not to desire men and to take female lovers. Frequently this diagnostic statement is followed by the recommendation of clitoridectomy.

²⁸ I am only at the beginning of this work, so what follows is preliminary and at times speculative.

²⁹ There is a huge literature on this topic. See Dallal, "Pre-Modern Scientific Discourses," for an excellent summary.

³⁰ Dallal, "Pre-Modern Scientific Discourses," 401.

³¹ See, for instance, Yusuf ibn Muhammad Yusufi Hiravi, Kitab-i Tibb-i Yusufi: mausum beh Jami al-Favayid, a 16th century text printed in the 19th century, ed. by Mirza Abd al-Mutallib Kashani. Tehran: s.n., 1285 AH (1868).

³² For a rich analysis of Safavid medical texts, with a focus on their differential gender presentation, see Behzad Karimi, “Mauqi‘iyat-i zanan dar guftman-i pizishki-i ‘asr-i Safaviyah,” [Status of women in the medical discourse of the Safavid era] unpublished manuscript.

³³ The French text may well have been the seventeenth-century book, Conjugal Love, or, The pleasures of the marriage bed, penned by the French surgeon Nicholas Venette, which had already gone through 8 printings before his death in 1698. One of the most popular of all the European sex manuals, it had a reputation as “the Bible of the French peasantry,” and was often revised, and translated into numerous languages. My thanks to Pat Simons for this lead.

³⁴ I want to emphasize that when thinking about transplanted categories, my concern is not to demonstrate or trace “origin” of transplant. Rather, I ask what that transplanting, appropriation, and embracing means for importers? What work do transplanted categories perform in their new habitus and in relation to the many other discursive practices that inform their meaning there.

³⁵ For full discussion, see Schayegh, Who Is Knowledgeable is Strong.

³⁶ Suhrab’s locations, both in the army and in Shiraz, are significant issues for more research. Several of the early translators of this genre were from southern Iranian cities (Shiraz, Dizful, Ahvaz), which had become (over the previous century, but especially after the 1917 Russian Revolution removed the Tsarist government as a competing influence) an expanding domain of cultural, economic, and political presence of the British. That English books had become available at local book-sellers indicates the commerce in books between southern Iran and British India. Suhrab’s translations

included other titles from the same series Rahnuma-yi mardan az nazar-i bihdasht va zanashu'i (Guidance for men on hygiene and marriage), and Rahnuma-yi pisanar (Guidance for boys). The second title is probably a translation of the 1909 book, What a young boy ought to know. In later decades, more titles from the series were translated into Persian by Nusratallah Kasimi, a physician and a publicist during the Pahlavi period whose translations continue to be reprinted. These include Ancheh bayad yik javan bidanad (What a young man ought to know, np, nd, at least four reprints, first published in 1937), Ancheh bayad har zan-i shauhardar bidanad (What every married woman ought to know, Tehran: Kumish, sixth reprint 1994), Ancheh bayad har mard-i zandar bidanad (What every married man ought to know, Tehran: Shirkat-i Mu'allifan va Mutarjiman-i Iran, 1990), and Ancheh bayad har dukhtar bidanad (What every girl ought to know, Tehran: Kumish, eighth reprint 2006, first published in 1974).

³⁷ For a discussion of significance of translating Self into Personal directives, see Najmabadi, Sex-in-Change, chapter 8.

³⁸ For the significance of Dar al-Funun, see Maryam Ekhtiar, The Dar al-Funun: Educational reform and cultural development in Qajar Iran, Ph. D. dissertation (New York University, 1994).

³⁹ His books included Venereal Diseases (Amraz-i zuhravi (muqaribati), 1931), Massage and Touch (Malish va tamas, Tehran, 1932, on the ill consequences of “unnatural regenerative relations, such as masturbation, tribadism and rubbing (tabaq-zani, musahiqah), and Sapphism.”), and another on male same sex practices ('ubna and liwat). For full discussion of Tutia within the context of the establishment of medical sciences and practices, see Schayegh, Who is Knowledgeable is Strong, Chapter 6.

⁴⁰ For a persuasively argued and historically rich analysis of this issue, see Schayegh, Who is Knowledgeable is Strong.

⁴¹ In recent decades, and especially consolidated in post-1979 period, there has been a new coming together of this popular psychology discourse with Islamic writings on sexual desire, needs of the youth, marital relations, etc.

⁴² Published by Kanun-i Ma‘rifat, a highly respected publisher of the period, which had earlier published Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge, and other texts. For a fuller discussion of this genre see, Sex in Change, chapter 2. At least twelve different translators have re-translated this text. Each translation has gone through numerous reprints, as high as nineteen over one decade, sometimes by different publishers. These numbers are very incomplete; I have compiled them through searching the online catalogue of National Archives and Library, which made it legally obligatory for publishers to send to it two copies of all publications only in 1990. The later editions are translated from a new edition of the English as revised by Gloria Stone Aitken and Aquiles J. Sobrero (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965). The first English edition had appeared in 1935. One translation, that of Tarazallah Akhavan’s, Tehran, Gulsha’i, 1997 (reprinted at least eight times by this publisher, and at least 9 times by Arghun, and by two other publishers as well) has been used to produce an audio version for the blind.

⁴³ I owe the expression vernacular science to Tani Barlow. Barlow invokes the emergence of vernacular sociology in China as a field that was discursively productive for and related to how advertisements marketed particular set of modern girl commodities. She analyzes advertisements themselves as pedagogical texts, popularizing scientific notions about health and hygiene, skin care, women care, etc. Tani Barlow, “Buying In:

Advertising and the Sexy Modern Girl Icon in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s,” pp. 288-316, in The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization, edited by Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn M. Thomas, Priti Ramamurthy, Uta G. Poiger, Madeleine Yue Dong, and Tani E. Barlow, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

⁴⁴ Ittila‘at, 15 November 1933, p. 1, and continued in the next issue, 18 November 1933, p. 1. Khvajah‘nuri’s many books include Rumuz-i ravani-i mudiriyat (Psychological secrets of management. Tehran, no publisher or year of publication), Ravankavi: ganj-i pinhan-i darun-i khaud ra kashf kun (Psychoanalysis: discover the hidden treasure of your inner self. Tehran, no publisher or year of publication), Ravankavi ya tariqah-i sahl baray-i shinakhtan-i ihsasat-i makhfi-i khaud va digraran (Psychoanalysis or the easy way to know your and others’ hidden feelings. Tehran: np, 1963), Ravankavi va darman-i tars, tanbali, kamru‘i, ya’s, hisadat (Psychoanalysis and treating fear, laziness, shyness, hopelessness, and envy. Tehran: Ibn Sina, 1957).

⁴⁵ See Camron Amin, The Making of the Modern Iranian Women: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.

⁴⁶ Ittila‘at, 25 December 1934, p. 2 and 26 December 1934, p. 2, no author. Quote from first part.

⁴⁷ This proposition echoes Thomas Laqueur’s analysis in Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁴⁸ In other words, to take one example, in jurisprudential discourse (fiqh) the lesser share of a daughter’s share of inheritance (half that of a son) was not articulated as derivative from some deficiency of the female compared to the male, whether in body, intellect, or

otherwise. Such differences were God-created “facts of social life,” encoded into the Qur’an and the body of what has become foundational to Islamic jurisprudence, namely the hadith (narratives attributed to the Prophet or one of his closest companions) and tafsir (interpretations of the Qur’an). Indeed, where in later literature a logical connection was argued between the two, the line of logic ran in the opposite direction: Women were said to be inferior to men on account of the allocation of a lesser share of inheritance.

⁴⁹ Probably published by Ma‘rifat, advertised as available at Ibn Sina, Ma‘rifat, Cyrus, and Safi-‘Alishah bookstores.

⁵⁰ The book, possibly the Freud section of Die Heilung durch den Geist: Mesmer. Mary Baker-Eddy. Freud. (Leipzig: Insel-verlag, 1931), was published by Kanun-i Ma‘rifat. Earlier its publication had been advertised in Ittila‘at, 11 July 1948, p. 2, and Ittila‘at, 6 September 1948, p. 2.

⁵¹ Without having the space to go into this issue, I do want to draw attention that from the earliest moment of entry of “perversion” into Persian, it became sucked into deviation, *inhiraf*, a concept associated with going off the straight path, *sirat-i mustaqim*, thus linking it to an important Islamic ethical injunction. This is a different configuration compared to the notion of perversion that emerged in nineteenth-century psychology. See Davidson, The Emergence of Sexuality, chapter 3.

⁵² For samples of such advertisement (graphics of which deserve analysis) from this same period see Ittila‘at, 20 April 1948, p. 5; Ittila‘at, 2 August 1948, p. 3; Ittila‘at, 11 August 1948, p. 3. Similarly, in academic medical literature until the early 1950s, *jins* continued to be used in its meaning of genus. Hasan Mirdamadi’s Mikraub-shinasi-i Mir, for instance, translated *antigène* as padgin, explaining in a footnote that *gène* came from

Latin genus and as such it had common roots with Persian gin, which was used in contemporary language in such words as hamgin, meaning hamjins. Mir's Microbiology (the back of the book has the title in French as: *Précis de microbiologie et sérologie*), Tehran: Raushana'i, 1937, p. 422. See also p. 428 where *homogène* is translated as hamgin and hamjins.

⁵³ English title as printed on the back cover: A Textbook of Psychophysiological Sexology (Tehran: Tahuri, 1968. Reprinted in 1973 and 1979).

⁵⁴ See Agostino Cilardo, "Historical Development of the Legal Doctrine Relative to the Position of the Hermaphrodite in the Islamic Law." The Search 2: 7 (1986): 128–70; and Paula Sanders, "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law." In Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting boundaries in Sex and Gender, edited by Beth Baron and Nikki Keddie, 74–95. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

⁵⁵ For a fuller elaboration, see Najmabadi, *Sex-in-Change*, chapter 5.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, the interview with Dr. Shahriar Kohanzad, one of the top SR surgeons in Iran, in the special dossier in the monthly magazine of the Welfare Organization of Iran, Mihr-i naw, 4 (November/December 2009): 23–44 on transsexuality. The interview runs from page 40 to 43. The entire dossier is framed by the notion of "contradiction between soul and body" (*tazadd-i ruh va jism*).

⁵⁷ Muhammad Mahdi Karimi'nia, Taghyir-i jinsiyat az manzar-i fiqh va huquq (Sex-change from the perspective of fiqh and law). Qum: Intisharat-i markaz-i Fiqhi-i A'ammah-i Athar, 2010, 42-43.

⁵⁸Mark Johnson, Beauty and Power: Transgendering and Cultural Transformation in the Southern Philippines. Oxford: Berg, 1997, 104.

⁵⁹ Sinnott similarly notes, “Thais often use specific terms for homosexual or transgendered individuals, such as ‘gay,’ ‘tom,’ ‘dee,’ ‘tut,’ or ‘kathoey’ rather than trying to reach for an overarching term that could encompass all these categories, such as ‘homosexual,’ ‘third sex/gender’.” Megan Sinnott, Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004, 8.

⁶⁰ See the early Homan article, referenced above, defining the “musts” of homosexual relationships, but this is now common discourse in many sites. For a critique, see Shakhari, "From Hamjensbaaz to Hamjensgaraa."